

## WHY EAST TIMOR? AN ANALYSIS OF BRAZIL'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

### POR QUE TIMOR LESTE? UMA ANÁLISE DA COOPERAÇÃO PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO DO BRASIL

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**Abstract:** After the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire and the struggle against the Indonesian occupation, Brazil supported East Timor to rebuild itself and, to this end, this article aims to analyse why Brazil's position towards East Timor has helped the country to develop its image and structure as a newly independent country. Hence, the purpose of this research is to investigate the impact Brazilian aid has/had in East-Timor both economically and politically. This research applies the 1973 chancellor's João Augusto de Araújo Castro "3Ds" political theory of foreign aid to the analysis as well as the Brazilian Agency of Development's (ABC) role in its development. It concludes that, currently, Brazil plays an important role in development cooperation in the world, consequently, increasing the country's importance in the international sphere.

**Key-words:** Brazil. Development. Technical assistance. Peace-keeping. East Timor.

**Resumo:** Após o colapso do império colonial português e a luta contra a ocupação indonésia, o Brasil apoiou a reconstrução de Timor Leste e baseado nisso o artigo visa analisar por que a posição do Brasil em relação ao Timor Leste ajudou o país a desenvolver sua imagem e estrutura como um país recém-independente. Assim, o objetivo desta pesquisa é investigar o impacto que a ajuda brasileira tem/teve em Timor-Leste tanto economicamente quanto politicamente. Esta pesquisa aplica a teoria política "3Ds" do Chanceler João Augusto de Araújo Castro de 1973 de *foreign aid*, bem como analisa o papel da Agência Brasileira de Cooperação (ABC) em seu desenvolvimento. Esta pesquisa conclui que o Brasil hoje desempenha um papel importante na cooperação para o desenvolvimento no mundo, aumentando assim a importância do país no âmbito internacional.

**Palavras-chave:** Brasil. Desenvolvimento. Assistência técnica. Manutenção da paz. Timor Leste.

**Recebido:** 11/02/2021.

**Aprovado:** 15/02/2021.

#### Initial considerations

The question of East Timor was undoubtedly one of the most important events in post-cold war international relations. In the 1970s, when the Portuguese empire dissolved with the independence of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe, East Timor also

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sought to have the same fate. In the process of defining the colony's political situation, amidst uncertainties in the metropolis, three political groups emerged in Timor, the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) which advocated maintaining ties with Portugal, the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (Apodeti), which sought to integrate with neighbouring Indonesia, and the Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor (Fretilin), who aspired complete independence from the country. East Timor became independent shortly after a referendum imposed by the United Nations (UN) in 1975. Independence that became a reason for rebellions on the part of militias that opposed its independence.

The UN in turn starts its peace-keeping missions in order to alleviate the humanitarian crises in the country. For Brazil, the response to the Timorese conflicts had a distinctive meaning, as it represented a chance for the Brazilian government re-establish itself internationally. The Brazilian objective was to get closer to other countries outside the US-European Union axis, showing that Brazil was looking for different forms of reintegration in the international scenario. Brazilian foreign policy reinforced ties with developing countries that prioritised The Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). In this sense, Brazil takes an active role in the UN peace-keeping missions in the country and soon afterwards seeks to intensify its international influence with humanitarian aid in the area of technical and sustainable cooperation in the young country.

To weigh this process, an attempt is made to analyse Brazil's performance in the case of East Timor, and in a quantitative approach analyse the projects implemented by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) within the country and to additionally, identify the real importance of the projects imposed by the Brazilian government in the country and their results.

The South-South cooperation is becoming an initiative that complements official development assistance (ODA) and becomes one of the instruments for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which Brazil is implementing both bilaterally and through the IBSA and CPLP (Silva-Rêgo & Figueira, 2018, p.139-160). Brazil proposed a discussion on the issue of security and development in the UN Security Council (Mariani, 2007, p. 234-253; Seibert, 2011). In connection with the consideration of the issue of "Maintaining international peace and security", which noted the relationship between security and development, the relationship between the economic, political, social aspects of conflict resolution, between peacekeeping and consolidating peace, which together makes a step towards sustainable development (UNDP, 2016).

To strengthen the south-south cooperation further the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) opens in Brazil, in 2002, which is closely linked to the "Academic Forum: a policy Dialogue" created within the IBSA group, and with the Poverty Group of the

Bureau for Development Policy. The creation of this Centre was the implementation of a joint project between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Brazil to study the problems of poverty and inequality in the developing world with the mission to develop recommendations for their reduction. Ever since there were several projects developed in different regions of the south hemisphere with the goal to fight inequality and poverty.

For African countries, the Brazilian Centre prepared a large-scale programme on social policy, such as the Brazil-Africa Cooperation Programme on Social Development and a comprehensive review on social policy in times of crisis, also known as the Social Policies in a Period of Crisis programme (UNDP, 2016), with the idea to establish a more efficient approach to tackle social issues, in areas, such as education, health, and unemployment, creating, then, a “partnership for development” between developing countries.

The concept of “partnership for development”, adopted by Brazil, develops the idea that cooperative relationships imply the sharing of efforts and benefits, improving the mechanisms of coordination, evaluation and project management in accordance with national priorities (Puente, 2010). Brazil sees that international technical cooperation, as a strategic partnership option, represents an instrument capable of producing positive impacts on populations, altering and raising standards of living, changing realities, promoting sustainable growth and contributing to social development.

The programmes implemented by Brazil allows the transfer of knowledge, successful experiences and transfer of sophisticated equipment, thus contributing to improve skilled human resources and strengthen institutions in the receiving country (ENSP, 2021).

International Technical Cooperation (SSC) is of great interest to a wide segment of society, including government sectors and the public, as it provides quick access to technology, knowledge, information, and training. Even though Brazil’s concept of “partnership for development” has no profitable or commercial purposes it prioritises technical cooperation programs that favour the intensification of Brazil’s relations with its partners and establish partnerships that will favour Brazil’s National Interests. And, according to its development assistance concept of 2004, it prioritises CPLP countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia (ENSP, 2021).

The article is divided into three parts: the first is a brief introduction to the concept of Brazilian technical cooperation in the world and in East Timor, where the authors seek to assess the real intentions of the Brazilian government when implementing such means of cooperation. The second part focuses on the attributes that ABC brings to Brazil, as the authors argue that the Agency has a prominent role in the development of Brazil’s donor policy. The last part of the article aims to

explore Brazil's progress from its peacekeeping missions to its engagement in humanitarian technical cooperation projects in East Timor.

### **1. ABC as a Tool for the Brazilian Technical Cooperation strategy**

The promotion of development was included in the Brazilian foreign policy discourse with the beginning of the anti-colonial movement, when new independent states began to appear on the world stage. Speaking at the UN, in 1963, Brazilian Foreign Minister A. Castro outlined the main principles of the country's foreign policy, which were called 3 "D" – disarmament, development, and decolonisation (in Portuguese: *Desarmamento, Desenvolvimento e Descolonização*) (Vargas, 2013, p. 28-19). It emphasised the need for "economic and social assistance to the vast majority of the world's population, who today live in sad conditions" and as a result the creation of new ways of cooperation started to gain more attention in the Brazilian foreign politics (Franco, 2008, p. 184-185).

The creation in 1987 of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (in Portuguese: *Agência Brasileira de Cooperação*, ABC) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs marked a qualitatively new stage in the institutionalisation of this process. The role of ABC is to coordinate efforts, negotiate and oversee the various programmes and projects agreed and implemented in the framework of bilateral or multilateral cooperation, as well as with the official government representative for technical cooperation.

Currently, Brazil develops technical cooperation relations with Africa and provides assistance to the Asian countries, such as East Timor, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan, and the Middle East (territories of Lebanon and Palestine). These cooperation is being implemented both in a bilateral format, within the framework of South-South interaction, and in partnership with friendly countries and international organisations (UNDP, 2016).

ABC approved, in 2008, the implementation of 236 specific projects and activities for technical cooperation with 58 developing countries, and, in the year of its 30th anniversary, in 2017, ABC managed the implementation of 610 projects, for which US\$ 7.3 million were allocated with international organisations. ABC has carried out 39 projects in 14 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and nine countries in Africa for an amount of US\$ 10.7 million (ABC, 2017).

Brazil is expanding partnerships with 45 international organisations, regional and extra-regional blocs on projects in more than 100 developing countries with which Brazil has a technical cooperation agreement. For 30 years, ABC has carried out more than 7000 projects in 108 countries around the world, in which 124 Brazilian institutions participated (ABC, 2013). ABC represents a

fundamentally new mechanism for the implementation of international scientific and technical cooperation for Brazil, combining both technical and foreign policy functions. Scientific and technical assistance projects are developed through ABC in accordance with requests from foreign governments, and international organisations. ABC's technical cooperation to an increasing number developing countries including East Timor contributes to project a modern image of Brazil. ABC is currently one of the main instruments of Brazilian foreign policy, which is increasingly focused on the development of Brazil and its promotion as "global player" in the international arena.

ABC prepared, in 2013, a guide for the preparation and implementation of scientific and technical cooperation projects, developed a methodology for defining tasks at each stage, parameters for assessing the situation before the start of the project and at each stage of its implementation, performance assessment indicators and legal basis for each project. (ABC, 2013). ABC participates in all stages of project preparation, implementation, and coordination of activities of various structures, from personnel recruiting to estimated cost calculations. It also involves government agencies such as EMBRAPA (Agricultural Corporation of Brazil), IBAMA (Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources), Fiocruz (Osvaldo Cruz Foundation), SENAI (National Service for Vocational Education), funding banks (BNDES), and other departments (ABC, 2013).

ABC has been coordinating the Brazilian government's response to humanitarian emergencies since 2016, through donations of food, medicine, and other essential items to assist countries in social and environmental disaster. Since September 2018, professional diplomat Rui Pereira has been at the head of ABC. Brazil currently provides technical cooperation: (i) through South-South cooperation; (ii) an innovative format of tripartite cooperation with developed countries or international organisations for the benefit of third countries; and iii) also through South-North cooperation actions, especially in areas of recognised good practice (ABC, 2017, p. 330).

Hence, through its cooperation Brazil aims to expand its influence within the Global South and/or international organisations. A strategy that gained more power with Lula's administration where the country sought to change its image of country recipient to donor. Such efforts were also followed by the presidency of Dilma Rousseff, which was the candidate from Lula's party – PT (Frayssinet, 2011). IPEA (2010) suggested that Brazil only changed its position as receiver to donor due to its constitutional reforms, democratic development, and the implementation of sustainable social policies and economic stability. As a result, efforts on South-South cooperation were increased.

Brazil's South-South technical cooperation focuses on agriculture, vocational training, education, justice, sports, health, environment, information technology, urban development, tourism, and human rights. The main recipients of such assistance in 2018 were 42 African states, where the largest number of technical cooperation projects are being implemented in Portuguese-speaking countries (ABC, 2013).

**Table 1. Bilateral technical cooperation between Brazil and Portuguese-speaking countries (1998-2017)**

| Country               | Agreement  | Number of projects | Value (US\$) |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------|--------------|
| Mozambique            | General Cooperation Agreement (1981, renewed 1984).                                | 141                | 15,6         |
| Sao Tome and Principe | Basic agreement on scientific and technical cooperation (1984)                     | 97                 | 10,8         |
| Cape Verde            | Basic Agreement for Scientific and Technical Cooperation (1977, extended in 1980). | 90                 | 5            |
| <b>East Timor</b>     | <b>Technical Cooperation Agreement (2002)</b>                                      | <b>75</b>          | <b>10,8</b>  |
| Angola                | Agreement on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (1980)                 | 78                 | 5,8          |
| Guinea-Bissau         | Basic Agreement for Technical Cooperation (1978)                                   | 62                 | 7,6          |
| Equatorial Guinea     | Basic Cooperation Agreement (2009)   | 03                 | 0,1          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          |  | <b>546</b>         | <b>55,7</b>  |

Source: The authors, based on ABC Activities Report (2017)

The table shows the number of projects Brazil led based on the latest ABC report of 2017. According to ABC's data, East Timor received approximately 75 projects in different areas and amounted over 10 million American dollars. In this research, the authors try to answer the questions why Brazil decided to assist East Timor's development. A question that rises is: Why Brazil is so keen on developing its south-south influence and reach out to East Timor? According to Pino (2010), Brazil sees in its "good shepherd" image a way of increasing its changes to gain supporters that will back his claim for a permanent seat on the UNSC.

It should be noted that the UNSC has 15 state members, 10 of these have a temporary character, while the other five are permanent members. The permanent members have veto power on the rulings of the UNSC (IPEA, 2010), representing therefore an important tool for international politics. There have been academic discussions on this matter, defending that the UN should include more countries as permanent members to reflect the more multilateral characteristic of the world

politics. The IPEA (2010) informs that Brazil was part of the UNSC for 9 times, on temporary mandates. Another reason that led the Brazilian government to act in Timor was the opportunity to participate in a UN peace operation that is in line with its national interests and restore its image as a democratic country after its military regimen, and expand the idea of a possible UN reform.

Brazil also would gain more “influence” when negotiating its agenda with other international actors, and for Brazil, this would enhance its opportunity to show his leadership in Latin America internationally. There is more behind Brazil’s Development Cooperation than just an act of good faith. The country aims at: (1) Foreign policy, wishing to have a permanent seat in the UNSC in order to get more influencing power; (2) economic aspirations, to extend businesses abroad; and above all, (3) as the demand on cooperation with Brazil has increased, due to the country’s own successful development, moving from aid receiver to aid donor, it has similar problems and solutions as other developing countries (Cabral & Weinstock, 2010).

In the case of East Timor Brazil may have a greater influence upon and therefore economic and cultural possibilities given its Lusophone bond. The UN peace-keeping operations in East Timor were a new opportunity for Brazil's ‘return’ internationally. In East Timor, Brazil presented itself as an innovator in areas like public health, education and tropical agriculture, framing its own development experiences (mostly gained in its peacekeeping operations and aid to Latin America and Africa).

## **2. East Timor: From Peace-keeping Operations to Development Cooperation**

East Timor was added, in 1960, by the United Nations General Assembly to its list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, when it was still administrated by Portugal. Later, in 1974 withdrew with failed attempted to determine the status of East Timor establish a provisional government which let to Indonesia’s occupation in 1976 and the annexation of East Timor as its 27th province.

The United Nations, however, never recognised such annexation at the request of the General Assembly, in 1982, successive Secretaries-General held regular talks with Indonesia and Portugal aimed at resolving the status of the territory. The negotiations resulted in a set of agreements between Indonesia and Portugal, signed, in New York, on 5 May 1999, when the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal entrusted the Secretary-General with organising and conducting a "popular consultation" in order to ascertain whether or not the East Timorese people accepted or rejected a special autonomy for East Timor within the unitary Republic of Indonesia.

The United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was established by Security Council Resolution 1246, on 11 June 1999, to organise and conduct a popular consultation based on a direct,

secret and universal ballot. In August 1999, voters went to the polls: 98 percent of the registered Timorese voters by 78.5 percent rejected the proposed autonomy, which gave the means to begin a process of transition towards independence and not long after East Timor was divided into those who favoured its independence and those who opposed it – leading the country into a civil war. Pro-integration militias launched a campaign of violence, and looting throughout the entire territory.

To provide assistance to core administrative structures critical to the viability and political stability, law enforcement and public security of East Timor the United Nations Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISET) was established by Security Council resolution 1410/2002. Its responsibility was also to assist the newly independent state until all powers were fully transferred to the authorities of East Timor, which would allow the new state to strengthen its freedom.

After the end of UNMISET, the UN sends a political mission to East Timor (UNOTIL), between 2005 and 2006, to assist in the development of the most important government structures and its police as well as in personnel training to observe democracy and human rights (Suhrke, 2001). The UN created the Joint United Nations Mission (UNMIT, 2006-2012) to assist government and state institutions in maintaining stability, a culture of governance and promoting political dialogue. Its tasks included promoting the development of the national police, strengthening national capacities in the field of human rights protection, increasing the efficiency of the judicial system, and building capacity in post-conflict peacebuilding.

Following the assassination attempt on the President and Prime Minister of East Timor in February 2008, the UN expanded its efforts to strengthen the national police and to institutionalise governmental structures. In 2012, as part of the UN mission, Brazil sent observers for the presidential and parliamentary elections to East Timor (Blanco, 2015). Along with the provision of medical assistance, Brazilian troops and civilian experts were engaged in tasks on the world order, observing the course of elections and observing human rights, and rehabilitating the country's economy, which suffered during the hostilities.

From 1999 to 2002, Brazilian Sergio Vieira de Mello was the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for East Timor and worked to (re) build the young nation state. In 2002, Vieira de Mello became a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and, in 2003, he was appointed Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Iraq, where he died on August 19, 2003 (ACNUR, 2018).

The young state found itself in a difficult situation, as the economy was destroyed during the civil war. More than 80 percent of houses were razed to the ground; the surviving population mainly lived in rural areas, in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty. Australia, Portugal, USA, Japan,



and a number of other OECD member countries have made a certain contribution to the development of East Timor and assistance to the state-building process. However, Brazil found special aspects in the construction of a young state associated with the rehabilitation of the country's economy, the development of education, health care, the justice system, and state bureaucracy.

The Brazilian president F.E. Cardoso, in 2001, paid an official visit to East Timor and reaffirmed Brazil's commitment to build a democratic and stable society in this small country. A year later, in 2002, Brazil established diplomatic relations with Timor, when both countries signed an agreement on cooperation in the fields of education (2002), technical cooperation (2002), diplomatic training, military, administrative, technical personnel (2009), and defence (2010) (Da Costa Santos, 2020).

President Lula da Silva also paid an official visit to East Timor in 2008, and President José Ramos Horta of East Timor paid a return visit to the Latin American country, when both countries agreed on deepening their relations and cooperation. In 2008, following the visit of Brazilian President Lula da Silva, a Committee for Technical Cooperation between Brazil and East Timor was established and priority areas for technical cooperation identified.

As a result, 10 cooperation projects were established in areas such as training, justice, national security, culture, agriculture, education, public administration, sports, environment, and health. During the visit of the Prime Minister of East Timor to Brazil, in 2011, additional agreements on bilateral technical cooperation were signed (GOV, 2011). One of the most important areas of cooperation was the expansion of the use and study of the Portuguese language.

A very important task to be achieved by Brazil's mission, since the country aims to establish tie relations with East Timor through a common language and the CPLP community and to achieve such goal the Brazilian government launched the Portuguese Language Teachers Development Program in order to train teachers, develop new didactic material and improve school programmes. According to BRA / 04/043-S134 project on the training of teachers for primary schools, in the first stage, 61 schools and 2,900 students participated in it, where 21 teachers from Brazil trained 81 specialists, and 32 textbooks for high school were brought into line with the reality of East Timor (ABC, 2012).

The project continued and, in its second stage, more than one hundred teachers were trained, which significantly improved the educational process and student performance. From 2005 to 2014, around fifty Brazilian teachers were sent to work in East Timor every year. Consequently, Brazil's approach represents an important soft power tool, a means of (good) international reputation that

allows the country to expand the possibilities of establishing new alliances/relations in several areas.

Taking into account the fact that the population of East Timor has grown by almost a third since the declaration of independence, and a significant part is formed by young people, the lack of quality education becomes very central for their social integration into society. In 2020, the population of East Timor was estimated at 1.337 thousand people, 33.8 percent of which were persons under 15 years of age. If, in 2001, the literacy level of the entire population was 37.6 percent, then, in 2020, literacy among young people from 15 to 24 years old were 82.37 percent (ABC, 2020).

According to Sebastián (2004) and Nogueira (2014), such forms of academic cooperation is an international culture yet to be fully developed, but the case of the partnership between East Timor and Brazil represents that such culture is possible. In the framework of inter-university agreements, since 2015, 70 students have begun their bachelor's programme at the University for International Integration of the Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (UNILAB) and another 212 at 11 other universities in Brazil with scholarships from the Timorese Government in specialties, such as engineering, telecommunications, chemistry, architecture, meteorology, law, economics (Reis, 2015).

In East Timor, Brazil, with the assistance of SENAI, opened a Vocational Training Centre, where 2,600 Timorese trained in blue-collar jobs (construction, carpentry, industrial sewing, hydraulics, electricity, confectionery, and information technology). In 2014, this centre was transferred to the administration of the local government, which shows the success of Brazil's educational cooperation. (Blanco, 2015).

Additionally, through a project signed with the Timorese Civil Service Commission, the Brazilian National School of Financial Education (ESAF) trained 200 civil administration officials, and Brazilian lawyers and judges took part in a project to develop the country's judicial system (Reis, 2015). Brazilian teachers were sent to train specialists in legal disciplines, such as civil, criminal, administrative, family affairs, human rights, and gender issues. The Brazilian Diplomatic Academy (Rio Branco Institute) regularly accepts diplomats from East Timor for training, along with representatives of other Portuguese-speaking countries (ABC, 2017, p. 330).

The programme for strengthening public administration (BRA / 04/044-S470) is aimed at training management personnel for the civil service, developing an effective public policy. In 2011 alone, more than 350 civil servants from nine institutions at different levels were trained. Project BRA / 04/044-S467 aims to expand the use of the Portuguese language in public administration and

envisaged the training of 200 civil servants in 2013-2017. In 2017, the Programme to Support and Strengthen the Public Administration of East Timor, which was based on the expansion of the use of the Portuguese language in the public administration, was successfully completed (ABC, 2017, p. 330).

To institutionalise the parliament of East Timor the BRA / 04/043-S142 project provides technical assistance in the field of ICT and software systems, training in ceremonial and protocol events, stenography and transcription, support for communications, the creation of a parliamentary training centre, and training in the basics of legislation and law-making. The BRA / 04/043-S142 project aims to preserve materials from the National Archives of East Timor, in order to create an archival system, efficient document flow and storage of documents. The project trained 40 national archive staff and 30 archival technicians. In 2017, the project "Formation and Development of the National Archives System of East Timor ", implemented by the National Archives of Brazil, was successfully completed (ABC, 2017, p. 330).

ABC train teachers for agro-technical schools, where they train farmers, livestock specialists, and veterinarians. A number of programmes are aimed at developing entrepreneurship, micro-crediting, labour market analysis, and youth employment. The country is implementing social programmes that have worked well in Brazil, such as the *Bolsa da Mãe*, similar to the Brazilian *Bolsa-família* (Family basket), aimed at improving the social situation of the population.

The “Bolsa Mãe” programme was launched in March 2008, by the Government of Timor-Leste, together with some United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, ONUMUJERES and IOM) (ILO, 2021). Differently from the Brazilian programme, that reaches families in the poverty line, *Bolsa-Mãe* in East Timor is restricted to a select group (single mothers, widows and orphans) and, according to OIT, only 11 thousand families were benefited with the programme. This brings awareness to the scope of the programme, since it lacks in a broader reach and neglects the rights of other minorities as well.

In the health sector, Brazil is working with the Timorese Institute for Health Sciences (*Instituto de Ciências da Saúde*) to train professionals to prevent and to combat malaria and HIV/AIDS, to monitor child health and reduce child and maternal mortality. HIV/AIDS prevention in East Timor is very limited, as study shows that 16% of women aged between 15-49 years old had heard of it and only 1% of them knew how to prevent its transmission. According to UNAIDS (Aids Epidemic, 2003), 79% of professional women in Dili, Capital of Timor-Leste, did not know that the use of preservatives could prevent HIV/AIDS transmission.

In this area, Brazil provides drugs and vaccines for the treatment of diseases, promotes the development of the health system, and improves the diagnosis of diseases. Brazil also aid in anti-retroviral treatment, that is, in the HIV/AIDS prevention programme among young people inside and outside schools, with the support of television and radio media. Brazil also supported the preparation of the National Strategic Plan to Fight AIDS, from 2006 to 2010 (PEN II), in the establishment of an HIV/AIDS unit in the Ministry of Health, and training health professionals (12). However, in order to fulfil the demand regarding access to universal anti-retroviral treatment, a permanent expansion and consolidation of the South-South cooperation in health that Brazil provides to CPLP / PALOP member countries and among others is required (ABC, 2007)

In the National Security sector, much attention is paid to the training of the armed forces, intelligence, issues of ensuring national security. Project BRA / 13/008-S156 aims to train the police and strengthen the Timorese National Intelligence Service to combat terrorism, organised crime, drug trafficking, money laundering, and human trafficking. East Timorese specialists are trained in intelligence, counterintelligence, and counter-terrorism, applying methods and techniques used by the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN).

It should be noted that, in 2013, East Timor, with other members of the Commonwealth of Portuguese-speaking countries, participated in the Felino Exercise (part of a series of joint military exercises and combination, developed by military-technical cooperation with the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries - CPLP). It took place in the city of Espírito Santo, Brazil, to train military personnel to participate in humanitarian assistance activities in peacekeeping missions, under the auspices of the UN (MRE, 2016).

For East Timor, this represents an opportunity to grow its international experience in training, allowing the development of its operative capabilities through cross-wise exercises (the feline exercises are focused mainly on conflict prevention and humanitarian aid routines, including renovating a school). This is essential in cases of social development and post conflict operations and, for Brazil, as a host, this could represent the enhancement of its “soft-power” and its image of “good shepherd” among the members of the CPLP community.

A documentary movie (*10 anos da Cooperação Brasil & Timor Leste Documentário*) was produced by ABC, in 2012, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Brazil's presence in East Timor, highlighting all aspects of the Brazilian development assistance for Dili. As a result, it is possible to identify that, from 2000 to 2014, Brazil has implemented over 67 technical cooperation projects, worth around US\$ 6 million under the leadership of ABC. Out of 32 existing projects, nine have already been fully implemented for US\$ 2.2 million (ABC, 2017, p. 330), and, by 2017, eight more

projects have been successfully completed. The completion of majority of the projects highlights the importance of the Timorese question on the Brazilian foreign agenda with the aim at helping the country on its long road towards political and economic consolidation.

The 2017 technical cooperation project portfolio is consisted of five bilateral initiatives, two of which are underway, one is under negotiation and two were completed during that same year. Ongoing initiatives include the seventh phase of the East Timor's Justice System Project, the second phase of a project aimed at improving East Timor's intelligence services, and the project is under negotiation aims to improve the efficiency and transparency of law-making in the Timorese national parliament.

Hence, of the ongoing projects, 34% are related to vocational training and labour market, 25% to education, 17% to culture and national heritage, followed by 8%, respectively, in the areas of justice and national security, and agriculture. In terms of costs, 53% of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency's costs are for vocational training and labour market, and education, whilst 17% for culture and national heritage, 10% for national security, 8% for education, and 6% justice and agriculture (ABC, 2020).

The search for poverty reduction, the strengthening of food security, the encouragement of gender equality and sustainable development, through technological transfer and technical training supported by the Brazilian experience and ABC's institutional capacity has proved that the strategies adopted were successful. It is clear that Brazil acts with the purpose of generating benefits for the minorities in the country, aiming at protecting their basic human rights.

Hence, programmes that have an impact on the poorest population, such as health, education, training, and labour are among those that must be strengthened, expanded, and replicated. For this, Brazil cooperate with international actors, such as the IBSA Foundation (India, Brazil, South Africa) and FAO, to finance projects on agricultural conservation, sustainable development of the fish industry to ensure food security, and disaster risk reduction in East Timor (MRE, 2016).

East Timor has made significant progress in nation-building and political stability, social integration, education and health (Cassiani et al., 2015, p. 3-28). The country has an important geostrategic position in Southeast Asia and possesses oil, gas reserves, and other natural resources. The country's GDP shows positive dynamics: if, in 1990, its GDP was US\$ 0.20 billion and ranked 193rd place in the world, in 2019, it reached the 178th place, with a GDP of US\$ 1.651 billion.

Even though the country's social spending amounted to 30% of its GDP, in 2018, poverty rate still remains very high (Lloyds Bank, 2020), which shows that a lot of work regarding inequality is yet to be done. Between 2017-2019, within the framework of development assistance, East Timor

received an average of US\$ 170 million a year in aid and investments. However, the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, has led to a decline in production and consumption in East Timor, and an increase in unemployment, reducing this amount to US\$150 million. The government is betting on economic diversification and programmes, such as the “Plan of Economic Recovery”, adopted in order to fight the decline in production and consumption, and mitigate the economic crisis.

Even though there was a cut in East Timor’s financial aid, the Brazilian assistance in the development of vocational training, agricultural development, light industry, tourism is gaining in importance (Timor-Leste, 2020). The work of the Brazilian assistance in the development of the country's agriculture has proven to be vital. If one analyses the country’s export balance, it can be seen that, in 2018, East Timor accounted an amount of 62.1% of goods (mainly coffee beans 83.3% of the total volume) were exported, if compared to the same period in 2017 where its highest margin was 49.9%. When analysing its food segment, it is possible to identify a gradual decrease in imports from 97.3% in 2017 to 95.8% in 2018 (MRE, 2020).

Hence, under Brazil’s assistance, East Timor is increasingly conquering the international market and introducing itself in the globalised world. As indicated by the MRE data, the young country, despite facing several social and political problems, has been looking for new means of development. The economic growth of East Timor to Brazil is extremely important in order to reinforce the bilateral relations of the two nations. East Timor is growing rapidly and Brazil sees in the country an ally to conquer more space not only in South-East Asia but also in the Global South.

Trade and economic relations between the two countries have also been developing. Brazilian exports to East Timor from 2005 to 2017 increased almost 100 times (from US\$ 102 thousand to US\$ 9.6 million), imports – three times (from US\$ 1.35 thousand to US\$ 3.81 thousand). In 2014, Brazil's share of exports to East Timor was only 4.9% (11th among exporters), and 50th among importers. In 2019, the trade between the two countries amounted to US\$ 6.7 million, which is extremely insignificant. Brazil exports meat and meat products, confectionery, cheese, olive oil, beer, and mechanical equipment, and imports footwear and handicrafts (Brasil, 2020).

Bilateral technical cooperation programmes between Brazil and East Timor have a significant impact on the formation of the foundations of statehood, administration, social system, education, strengthening of unity, and the East Timor national identity, through the Portuguese language and culture use expansion, which is extremely important in taking into account its ethnic and cultural diversity. The process of state building is proceeding in parallel, taking into account the economic and social interests of the country, which expands the conditions for sustainable development. The important geo-strategic position of East Timor, significant oil and other mineral reserves also make

this country attractive for Brazilian business, which is actively working in neighbouring Indonesia, which, in turn, expands Brazil's foreign policy opportunities in this region, deepens mutual understanding and trust, and expands the basis for trade and economic relations.

### **Final considerations**

According to Pepe and Matias (2006), Brazil redirects its international position related to human rights shortly after the transition period from military regime (1964-1965) to democracy. This change demands a different posture from the country in the world and especially at the UN, as it is evident that the country is still looking forward to acquiring a permanent seat in the UNSC. Therefore, the East Timor Case became of extreme interest to the Brazilian government and by sending Brazilian military personnel to UN peace-keeping missions in East Timor, Brazil reintroduces itself on the world stage in a more ambitious way to (re) conquer its role as Global Player.

By analysing data, one can identify that with the Brazil aid, East Timor managed to develop politically and economically. Even after gaining its independence in 2002, Brazil, through its Brazilian Agency for Cooperation (ABC), sought to develop several projects that would aid the country's development in professional training (Sebrae and Senai), public administration, health (Funasa) and education (teaching of the Portuguese language).

A critique must be made, however, on the reliability of Brazilian data provided by the Government. According to Rebizzi (2013), Brazil would benefit greatly if, it was seen internationally as a good Samaritan, what would allow the country to expand the possibilities of establishing new alliances/ ties in several areas both regionally and internationally.

Another factor to be highlighted is the way that these data are displayed, as it varies from US dollars to Brazilian reais in different occasions. Therefore, a more concrete analysis on the results of the projects become more difficult due to the instability of the Brazilian currency in the international market, which may lead to wrong results and analysis. The study also shows that even though Brazil displays itself as a "good shepherd", the interests of Brazilian foreign policy are evident as it favours its need to become a dominant country not only in Latin America, but also in the new Global South which answers the question "why East Timor?". It is clear that by helping East Timor, both in peacekeeping operations and in technical cooperation, the Brazilian government expands this image of good donor and reinforces its interest in international reforms.

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